

## What is Claimed is:

- [c1] A method of predicting the search needs of a computerized database search user comprising the steps of:
- providing a topical category database, said topical category database containing a plurality of topical categories;
  - relating each of said topical categories with other said topical categories contained within said topical category database;
  - providing a document database, said document database having document information for at least one document;
  - assigning each of said documents to at least one said topical category;
  - providing an anticipated search term database, said anticipated search term database having at least one anticipated search term;
  - assigning each of said anticipated search terms in said anticipated search term database to at least one said topical category thereby creating an anticipated search term assignment;
  - receiving at least one initial search term;
  - matching said initial search term with at least one said anticipated search term contained within said anticipated search term database thereby creating a matched search term;
  - associating said initial search term with the topical category assigned to said matched search term thereby creating an initial topical category;
  - associating said initial search term to any topical categories related to said initial topical category thereby creating related categories.
- [c2] The method as claimed in Claim 1 further comprising the step of retrieving said document information of said documents assigned to said related categories.
- [c3] The method as claimed in Claim 1 where each said topical category is defined with a title and description.
- [c4] The method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the step of relating each of said topical categories with other said topical categories contained within said topical category database further comprises the step of relating each of said topical categories with other relevant topical categories.

- [c5] The method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the step of relating each of said topical categories with other said topical categories contained within said topical category database further comprises the step of relating each of said topical categories with other related topical categories.
- [c6] The method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the step of relating each of said topical categories with other said topical categories contained within said topical category database further comprises the step of relating each of said topical categories with other adjunct topical categories.
- [c7] The method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the step of assigning each of said documents to at least one said topical category further comprises the step of assigning each of said documents to a relevant topical category.
- [c8] The method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the step of assigning each of said anticipated search terms in said anticipated search term database to at least one said topical category thereby creating an anticipated search term assignment further comprises the step of assigning each of said anticipated search terms to a topical category based on said anticipated search term's definition.
- [c9] The method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the step of associating said initial search term with the topical category assigned to said matched search term thereby creating an initial topical category further comprises the step of calculating the most popular initial topical category for said matched search term.
- [c10] The method as claimed in Claim 9 wherein the step of calculating the most popular initial topical category for said matched search term further comprises the step of calculating the number of times a topical category is selected by other searchers in association with each said initial search term used.
- [c11] The method as claimed in Claim 9 further comprising the step of calculating the number of times said initial search term is repeated within the content of said document assigned to said topical category.
- [c12] The method as claimed in Claim 9 further comprising the step of subjectively

determining said most popular initial topical category.

[c13] The method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said initial search term comprises at least one word.